

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF DELAWARE

JAMES ROBERT HAMILTON,

Plaintiff,

v.

Civ. No. 12-1313-RGA

SUPERIOR COURT STATE OF  
DELAWARE,

Defendant.

---

James Robert Hamilton, Wilmington, Delaware, Pro Se Plaintiff.

**MEMORANDUM OPINION**

December 11, 2012  
Wilmington, Delaware

*Richard G. Andrews*  
ANDREWS, U.S. District Judge:

Plaintiff James Robert Hamilton filed this action pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983. He appears *pro se* and has been granted leave to proceed *in forma pauperis* (D.I. 5). The Court proceeds to review and screen the Complaint pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B).

Plaintiff names as a defendant the Superior Court of the State of Delaware. He alleges that he was wrongfully convicted in April 1996 and his civil rights were violated by reason of race.

This Court must dismiss, at the earliest practicable time, certain *in forma pauperis* actions that are frivolous, malicious, fail to state a claim, or seek monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. See 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2). The Court must accept all factual allegations in a complaint as true and take them in the light most favorable to a *pro se* plaintiff. See *Phillips v. County of Allegheny*, 515 F.3d 224, 229 (3d Cir. 2008). An action is frivolous if it “lacks an arguable basis either in law or in fact.” *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 325 (1989). Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(i), a court may dismiss a complaint as frivolous if it is “based on an indisputably meritless legal theory” or a “clearly baseless” or “fantastic or delusional” factual scenario. *Neitzke*, 490 U.S. at 327-28.

The legal standard for dismissing a complaint for failure to state a claim pursuant to § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii) is identical to the legal standard used when ruling on Rule 12(b)(6) motions. See *Tourscher v. McCullough*, 184 F.3d 236, 240 (3d Cir. 1999). However, before dismissing a complaint or claims for failure to state a claim upon which relief may be granted pursuant to the screening provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 1915, the Court must

grant Plaintiff leave to amend his complaint, unless amendment would be inequitable or futile. See *Grayson v. Mayview State Hosp.*, 293 F.3d 103, 114 (3d Cir. 2002).

A well-pleaded complaint must contain more than mere labels and conclusions. See *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662 (2009); *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544 (2007). The assumption of truth is inapplicable to legal conclusions or to “[t]hreadbare recitals of the elements of a cause of action supported by mere conclusory statements.” *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 678. When determining whether dismissal is appropriate, the court conducts a two-part analysis. *Fowler v. UPMC Shadyside*, 578 F.3d 203, 210 (3d Cir. 2009). First, the factual and legal elements of a claim are separated. *Id.* The Court must accept all of the complaint's well-pleaded facts as true, but may disregard any legal conclusions. *Id.* at 210-11.

Second, the Court must determine whether the facts alleged in the complaint are sufficient to show that the plaintiff has a “plausible claim for relief.” *Fowler*, 578 F.3d at 211. In other words, the complaint must do more than allege the plaintiff's entitlement to relief; rather, it must “show” such an entitlement with its facts. *Id.* A claim is facially plausible when its factual content allows the Court to draw a reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged. See *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 678. The plausibility standard “asks for more than a sheer possibility that a defendant has acted unlawfully.” *Id.* “Where a complaint pleads facts that are ‘merely consistent with’ a defendant's liability, it ‘stops short of the line between possibility and plausibility of ‘entitlement to relief.’” *Id.* (quoting *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 570).

Because Plaintiff proceeds *pro se*, his pleading is liberally construed and his Complaint, “however inartfully pleaded, must be held to less stringent standards than formal pleadings drafted by lawyers.” *Erickson v. Pardus*, 551 U.S. 89, 94 (2007) (internal quotation marks omitted).

The Superior Court is immune from suit. The Eleventh Amendment of the United States Constitution protects an unconsenting state or state agency from a suit brought in federal court by one of its own citizens, regardless of the relief sought. See *Seminole Tribe of Fla. v. Florida*, 517 U.S. 44, 54 (1996); *Pennhurst State Sch. & Hosp. v. Halderman*, 465 U.S. 89 (1984); *Edelman v. Jordan*, 415 U.S. 651 (1974). Hence, as a state entity, the Superior Court is entitled to immunity under the Eleventh Amendment. See *Benn v. First Judicial Dist. of Pa.*, 426 F.3d 233, 239-40 (3d Cir. 2005) (concluding that Pennsylvania’s First Judicial District is a state entity entitled to Eleventh Amendment immunity).

In addition, to the extent that the claims are raised pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983, they are time-barred. For purposes of the statute of limitations, § 1983 claims are characterized as personal injury actions. *Wilson v. Garcia*, 471 U.S. 261, 275 (1983). In Delaware, § 1983 claims are subject to a two-year limitations period. See 19 Del. C. § 8119; *Johnson v. Cullen*, 925 F.Supp. 244, 248 (D. Del. 1996). Section 1983 claims accrue “when the plaintiff knew or should have known of the injury upon which its action is based.” *Sameric Corp. v. City of Philadelphia*, 142 F.3d 582, 599 (3d Cir. 1998). Plaintiff’s claim accrued in 1996 yet he did not file his complaint until 2012.

The claims against Defendant have no arguable basis in law or in fact. The Complaint will be dismissed as frivolous pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B). Amendment of the Complaint is futile.

An appropriate order will be entered.